

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the careful review of the present application. After consideration of the Office Action, Applicants submit the following remarks. Claims 1-19 remain pending in the present application and have not been amended. No new matter is added.

Drawings

The Office Action objected to the drawings as being not in compliance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(d). Applicants have submitted herewith a new set of formal drawings marked "Replacement Sheet", but not otherwise amended. Applicants assert that these drawings are in compliance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(d), and therefore request withdrawal of the objection.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Office Action rejected claims 1-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Pfeiffer et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,556,738) in view of Jennings et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,263,136). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

As presented, independent claims 1 and 17 require a module/chassis having front and rear faces, with two input ports and two output ports on both the front and rear faces, two monitor ports on the front face, two switches on the front face, two visual indicators on the front face, and a power input connector on the rear face, where each module includes circuitry selectively linking the front face ports and rear face ports in normal through or patched configurations, where the circuitry defines the patched and normal paths and wherein the switches operate to select the appropriate circuitry paths. Claim 9 is analogous, but includes a single input and output port per face, and incorporates a monitor port for the set of input and output ports. Applicants assert that the combination of Pfeiffer et al. and Jennings et al. at least does not render obvious the monitor ports or switches on the front face of the module.

As an initial matter, Pfeiffer et al. does not disclose a monitor port for each switch on the front face of the module. The Examiner recognized this on pages 3-4 of the Office Action. Applicants note that inclusion of this feature is neither inherent in nor suggested by Pfeiffer et al. With respect to multiple monitor ports, Pfeiffer et al. only shows one monitor port used in

conjunction with multiple input and output ports, and in fact discloses using other input and output ports to monitor normal through operation of multi-signal equipment connected to the module in the case where multiple signals are monitored. See Fig. 20 and column 8, lines 11-13 of Pfeiffer et al. Therefore, Pfeiffer et al. would not need a monitoring port for each input and output port, even if multiple signals were to be monitored - the Pfeiffer et al. system would use the splitter switch to both transmit and monitor signal operation. With respect to the inclusion of switches, Applicants assert that Pfeiffer et al. does not suggest inclusion of additional manual control elements because a major advantage of Pfeiffer et al. is the potential of remotely controlled switching. See, e.g., column 6, lines 14-15; column 7, lines 44-45. Furthermore, Pfeiffer already discloses switching operation, without manual switches, via the control circuitry and internal optical switches. Column 6, lines 16-19. Added switch hardware for manual local control would provide redundant functionality to the remotely controllable switches already disclosed Pfeiffer et al.

Applicants observe that Jennings et al. cannot remedy the deficiencies present in Pfeiffer et al. Applicants note that Jennings et al. also does not disclose two monitor ports on the front face of the module. Applicants secondly note that although Jennings et al. discloses a switch, the switch is configured for manual control of an optical transmitter (i.e. source activation), and is not configured for routing of optical paths. Jennings et al. shows, most notably in Figure 3, a single fiber and corresponding optical transmitter control per module. Jennings et al. does not teach use of a switch for routing of existing fiberoptic signals, and therefore does not suggest combination with Pfeiffer et al. to route fiberoptic signals via a manual switch. Because Pfeiffer et al. and Jennings et al. do not teach use of a monitor port and switch for each path, Applicants assert that claims 1, 9, and 17 cannot be rendered obvious by such a combination.

For at least these two reasons, Applicants assert that the claims are allowable as presented, and are not unpatentable based on Pfeiffer et al. in view of Jennings et al. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the present rejection.

Claims 2-8 are dependent upon independent claim 1. Claims 10-16 are dependent upon independent claim 9. Claims 18-19 are dependent upon independent claim 17. Therefore, all of these claims inherit the features of the independent claims. These claims are therefore allowable

as well. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of these claims.

Conclusion

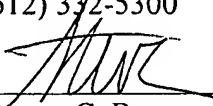

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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